

Indiana State Representative Robert Bischoff

Dear Friends:

The 2004 short session of the Indiana General Assembly will reconvene January 8. We will discuss a number of important items, including our continuing efforts to provide Hoosier taxpayers with real property tax relief.



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Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about state government.

Bob Bischoff

Helping Hoosier Families

Property Tax Relief

The Indiana General Assembly has passed a series of reforms that help build on the tax restructuring that took place in 2002. The reforms contained in the package approved by the legislature will provide nearly \$500 million in property tax cuts for homes, businesses and farms.

The deadline to file for the homestead credit and other credits and deductions was extended, which will help 95,000 Hoosier homeowners receive state property tax relief.

Counties will be able to offer installment payment plans to help taxpayers with larger bills, and penalties for late payments can be waived. Property taxpayers will have up to 45 days to appeal a bill.

While these provisions will help ease the burden on property taxpayers, I am disappointed we were unable to include additional protections that were approved by the House.

The House reforms would have given homeowners and farmers a larger share of property tax relief and provided additional relief for senior citizens. The House plan would have created a "farmstead" deduction to protect agricultural land owners while helping owners of older homes who have been harmed by the reassessment.

While these provisions were killed in the Indiana Senate, House Democrats will pursue these reforms when the legislature returns in January. The bills outlining our proposals have been filed and are ready for consideration.

The General Assembly's actions to date have demonstrated a bipartisan understanding that more must be done to help taxpayers, particularly those who own homes and farms. We must continue to protect their interests throughout the 2004 session.



Property Tax Relief Highlights

***Extension of filing deadline for homestead credit and other deductions**

***Counties could offer installment payment plans to taxpayers**

***Counties may waive penalties for late payments**

***Allow 45 days for taxpayers to appeal bills**

***Safeguards to limit local government property tax increases**

Please complete the survey and return it to me or go to www.in.gov/H68 to complete the survey online. A second person of your household may respond in the second set of answers.

2004 Legislative Survey

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Do you believe owners of older homes should receive additional property tax deductions? | 1. <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 2. Do you believe rental property owners should have increased property tax deductions? | 2. <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 3. Do you believe farmland owners should be granted increased property tax deductions? | 3. <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 4. Should Indiana's property tax system be abolished, with corresponding increases in other taxes to ensure that critical local services be continued? | 4. <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 5. Do you believe the ISTEP tests for educational progress should be given in the spring rather than the fall of the school year? | 5. <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 6. State officials have noticed an increase in instances of predatory lending, which takes place when mortgage brokers make loans with unreasonable terms, exorbitant interest rates and/or high fees that people are unlikely to be able to pay back, which often places them at risk of losing their home through foreclosure. Should the state place additional restrictions on this practice? | 6. <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 7. Should the state allow cameras at intersections to issue violations to reckless drivers? | 7. <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 8. In order to reduce jail overcrowding and corrections costs, should judges be given greater options to use community corrections and in-home detention programs rather than mandatory sentences? | 8. <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 9. Should "pull tab" gambling machines and other slot machines be allowed at Indiana's horse racing tracks and off-track betting parlors? | 9. <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no |
| 10. Do you support any additional expansion of gaming in the state of Indiana? | 10. <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no |